

KYMENLAAKSO AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

University of Applied Sciences

International Business/ International Marketing

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**RECRUITING VIETNAMESE STUDENTS TO KYMENLAAKSO UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED
SCIENCES**

Bachelor's Thesis 2010

ABSTRACT

KYMENLAAKSO UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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Recruiting Vietnamese students to Kymenlaakso
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Key words

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The main subject of the project is to create a theoretical research of impacts of culture, communication, education system on Vietnamese students when choosing schools. Development plan and suggestions to market universities to Vietnamese students will be also discussed from the empirical interviews and discussion.

The objective of this research is to equip the readers with essential methodologies of how Vietnamese culture, communication and education system affect Vietnamese students when studying abroad and give suggestions to attract this target group

In order to produce a comprehensive report, the qualitative method has been used, however, the thesis also analyses how the results of the theory can be used in the empirical part, more precisely said in the case of Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences.

The main finding of the study is a framework of a development plan for Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences to recruit more Vietnamese students. Therefore, another finding is also to give important guidelines for other Finnish universities to attract Vietnamese students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globalisation in the united world has profound impacts on education. An ever-increasing amount of universities worldwide have acknowledged the benefits of providing students with the option to study abroad, as a way to expand their education as well as broaden their appreciation for cultural and racial diversity.

It is clearly seen that the ultimate educational value to students of pursuing at least some portion of their undergraduate years living and learning in another country is no longer really debatable. As a result, students who leave college without having had a significant 'globalizing' experience as part of their undergraduate education, many educators now believe, will increasingly be thought of as not fully educated for the professional world they will enter. Also, students who have studied abroad have more opportunities apply for better jobs than others who have not.

In this past decade, since Finland has started to operate some English programmes in English, there has been a steady flow of foreign students who come to Finland to pursue their education; especially Asian students. However, cultural differences still remain because culture makes people unique.

1.1 Topic area

The topic area of the research is the Vietnamese education system and culture factors that affects to decision –making of which countries to study abroad. It is relevant and necessary because Vietnam is one of the promising targets of potential students to studying abroad mostly everywhere in the world. However, the numbers of Vietnamese students who choose to study in Finland are still not high. The recruitment staffs of Finnish universities consider effective methods to attract international students such as Vietnamese students.

1.2 Structure of the research

The research consists of two sections: theoretical and empirical part. The theoretical part is based on a literature review of culture and its levels. Also, it will discuss impacts of Vietnamese culture and education systems and short empirical analyses of differences between Vietnamese and Finnish. Finally, the empirical sections provide comments, suggestions to recruit more Vietnamese students. The structure of the study is shown in Figure 1.

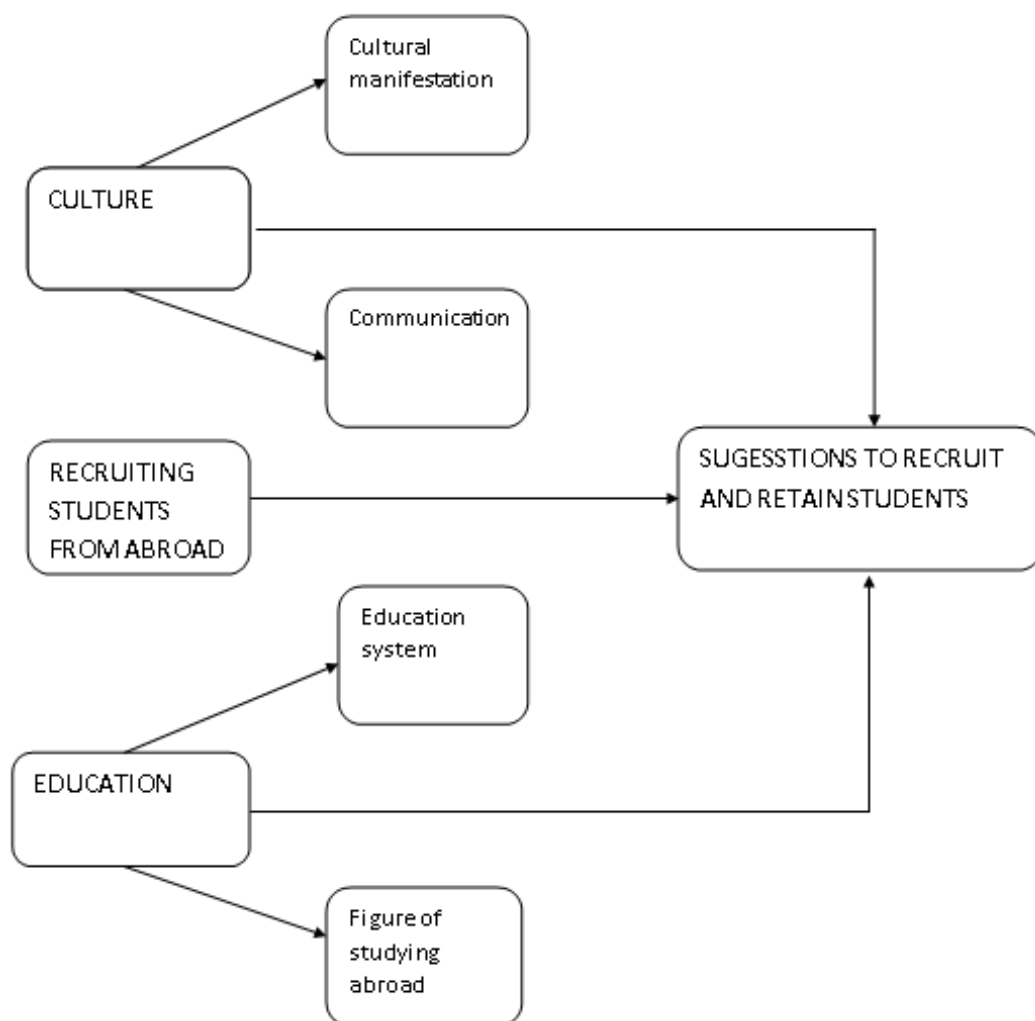


Figure 1: Chart of theoretical framework

1.3 Objectives and research problem

The objective of this research is to equip the readers with essential methodologies of how Vietnamese culture, communication and education system affect Vietnamese students when studying abroad and give suggestions to attract this target group. As a result of the research, there will be suggestions to recruit Vietnamese students to Finnish universities in general and Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences in particular.

The question for this study with which the author deals with are, as follows:

1. What decisions have to be taken into actions in order to recruit higher quantity of Vietnamese students to Finnish university in general and in case of Kymenlaakso University of Applied Science in detail/ particular?

To determine solutions for this question, the following subordinate questions should be answered:

2. What are the main characteristics of Vietnamese culture and education system? As a result, it is referred to an analysis of difference between Vietnamese and Finnish culture
3. What advices do professors, consultant in education and existing students suggest to recruit more students?
4. What cultural aspects have to be considered when marketing to Vietnamese students?

1.4 Methodology

The empirical part of this research based on is a qualitative approach (interviews and focus group). The primary research schedule can be seen in Appendix A.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research has been suggested the following kind of definitions:

Qualitative research

"... is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own term..."(Kirk and Miller,1986,9)

According to (2000), qualitative research based on meaning expressed through words, and collection results in non-standardised data requiring classification into categories and analysis conducted through the use of conceptualisation. The limitation of qualitative research is that it is subjective and single context.

a. Focus Groups

One central concept is focus group which has been defined in the following way:

" ... is a special type of group in terms of purpose, size, composition and procedures. ... It is a way to better understand how people feel or think about an issue, product or service. Participants are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the focus topic of the focus group."(Krueger and Casey, 2000, 4).

Therefore, the purpose of the focus group is to listen and gather information about Finnish universities, challenges, needs of Vietnamese students between the focus group members. At the end, the researcher can analyse their attitude towards the issue. A focus group will be established to gain different opinions through a discussion. Therefore, the focus groups for the thesis will consist of six to ten people from different backgrounds. All of the participants must have studied in Finland and must have their own opinions of Finnish universities. The focus group questions were divided into themes and categories in Appendix D to analyse and compare the result in each section.

b. Interviews

One of the most popular ways of primary research is in-depth interviews. The main purpose of research method is to gather respondents' opinions about the impacts of parent's and Vietnamese student's expectations to Finnish universities. The core questions will be about what they expect from Finnish universities and how to market to Vietnamese students. The interviewees of this method will be professor in education and education consultants in Vietnam.

The proposed interview questions can be seen in Appendix B, C and D.

1.3 Utility and limitation of the study

Cultural and education system between different countries have remarkably affected choice of university, a student's adaptation to new universities and other potential problems. This study suggests that those factors should be considered more carefully when dealing with very different cultures of foreign students and in this case, it is Vietnamese students in particular. This research will be cost-effective for recruiting staff of Finnish universities in their work if they acknowledge of Vietnamese culture and put into action some valuable suggestions and recommendations from the empirical part when dealing with Vietnamese existing and potential students.

Limitations of the study is that the results were obtained only from a focus group of 10 students and some interviews of educational professor, consultants, In conclusion, the basic limitation of this study is that the results does not represent to the whole Vietnamese students.

2. RECRUITING STUDENTS TO FINLAND

International students bring many benefits to Finnish education, especially Higher Education institutions. According to Lappalainen (2005, p2), it is stated that international students enrich the cultural and intellectual environment of a HIE's and their locality; stimulate new curriculum approaches and foster new understanding between cultures. Therefore, it is essential to define internationalisation strategies of university to choose what to focus in different strategically geographic areas.

The number of international students in Finland is indeed growing rapidly in most of the statistics. The number of exchange students is growing rather consistently, whereas the growth in the number of international degree students has accelerated in the past years, as can be seen in Figure 2 (Helenius, 2007, 4).

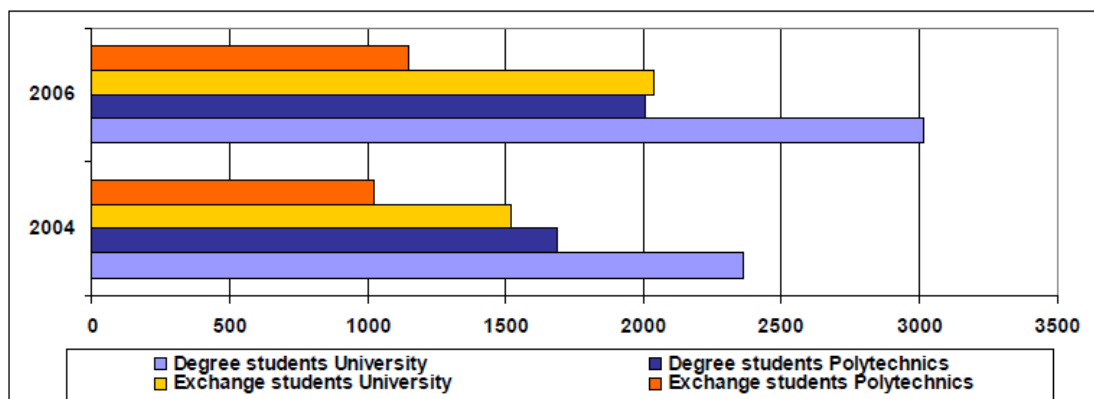


Figure 2: International students in Metropolitan area (Helenius, 2007, 4)

Helenius(2007, 42) also provided the statistics of International Degree and Exchange students in the Higher Education Institutes in the Metropolitan Area 2004 and 2006 in the next Figure 3.

University	International Degree Students 2004	International Degree Students 2006	International Exchange Students and Interns 2004	International Exchange Students and Interns 2006
Haaga-Helia	538	726	255	175
Evttek	254	349	155	155
Arcada	197	237	66	80
Diak	27	16	22	44
Stadia	184	204	98	158
Sydväst	30	6	11	7
Laurea	261	213	106	179
Humak	6	3	36	27
LAMK	130	130	121	126
HAMK	59	122	151	196
Total	1686	20006	1021	1147

Figure 3: Numbers of International students in Metropolitan area (Helenius, 2007, 42)

From the figure, it is clear to recognise that International students who study in Finland can be divided into long-term and short-term students. The long-term students consist of undergraduate degree students and post-graduate students. The short-term students include exchange students, usually coming to Finland via one of the many international exchange programs for a period of 3-9 months, visiting students and trainees coming to a Finnish university or polytechnic for a work practice period (Helenius, 2007, 42)

Recruiting international students into Finnish higher education system may sound like an easy task since the education is free and is regarded as a high quality of education. However, according to Lappalainen(2005, 9), anyone who has tried recruiting international students has realized very quickly that this is not an easy task. It is not only to offer education, but also it is important

for recruiter to prepare for giving a message, selling a unique product and be ready to answer tough questions. Therefore, CIMO (2005) has defined several trends in international student recruiting in different areas such as in Asia, EU countries, especially the new EU countries and China.

Joint application systems in Finland starts every spring and autumn for students is advance for the Universities of Applied Sciences and marketing is easy and basically free. Most higher education offer a search guide to every graduating student in Finnish language to help them make their choice for common education. However, although as similar guide is distributed for target group abroad by CIMO, the participation in the entrance examination for foreign applicants is someyimes difficult to arrange (Lappalainen, 2005, p 15).

The main recruiting strategy that are used in recruiting international students in Finland are partners, cooperation, benchmarking and other possibilities that has not been applied such as head-hunters and other private organizations.

Partners, especially foreign partners can play a key role in recruiting process and an example of that can be seen in the case of Saimaa University of Applied Sciences and Savonia University of Applied Sciences. Foreign partners take responsibilities to organise the entrance exam locally and select most of the students who take part the exam. As Lappalainen (2005, 11) provided that direct recruiting through foreign partners, those two universities have received good students for their English Degree programmes. Additionally, the motivation background of applicants can be easily checked to recruit the right students. However, the only disadvantage of this method is to find trustworthy and long-term partners who take the recruiting seriously and do not demand money from applicants for doing that.

Cooperation methods that have been applied in Finland are cooperation between different Universities of Applied Sciences, cooperation in exhibitions,

cooperation with CIMO and cooperation with Asian Networks. The most important point that should be noticed when start cooperation between partners is that both should have a common vision and strategy of recruiting systems and similar set of values between the actors (Lappalainen, 2005, 12).

The cooperation between different Universities of Applied Sciences can decrease the cost for each polytechnics and bigger group of participants can share better background knowledge of destination countries, organizations and partners. (Lappalainen, 2005, 12) also mentioned that some threats and challenges can appear because of the change of members in cooperation team, balancing the workload between polytechnics and rotation of recruiting tasks among the polytechnics.

Another cooperation method is cooperation in exhibition. For example, SCP took part in the recruiting fair in Poland where there are 55 000 students seek for study place in Poland in abroad. The economy of Poland has risen after joining the EU, and more and more students will seek place to study abroad,. Therefore, it is essential for Finnish polytechnics to be available and visible for the Polish students (Lappalainen, 2005, 11).

Cooperation with CIMO is also important method in recruiting students in Finland. The main reason is because CIMO promotes Finnish higher education in number of fairs and events abroad and CIMO encourages polytechnics to join educational fairs in recruiting purposes in Slovenia, Tallinn, Beijing and Holland (CIMO, 2005) and these fairs finished in 2007.

Another factor of recruiting strategy in Finland was cooperation with Asian Network and the project ended in 2009. The Asia-Net can be considered an efficient way to screen applicants according to Marja-Liisa Martens's presentation in Valkeakoski in 2005. It helps to arrange the entrance exam easily and bring plenty opportunities for Universities of Applied Sciences as the network operates in many Asian countries. However, this method causes difficulties in checking motivation of applicants without personal contact.

Universities of Applied Sciences's International Business (IB) accept the exam results of the other UAS IB-programmes in the FINNIBS network, but do not accept the results of the Great Capital Network (GCN). The list of participating UAS of Finnish Network for International Business Studies (FINNIBS) is published by the Finnish National Board of Education (2009).

Table 1: List of Universities of Applied Sciences in FINNIBS Network (Finnish National Board of Education, 2009)

List of universities in the FINNIBS	Degree program (DP)
Arcada	DP in International Business
Central Ostrobothnia UAS	DP in Business Management
JAMK UAS	DP in International Business
Kajaani UAS	DP in International Business
Kemi-Tornio UAS	DP in Business Management
Kymenlaakso UAS	DP in International Business
Mikkeli UAS	DP in Business Management
North Karelia UAS	DP in International Business
Oulu UAS	DP in International Business
Rovaniemi UAS	DP in Innovative Business Services
Saimaa UAS	DP in International Business
Satakunta UAS	DP in Innovative Business Services, DP in International Business and Marketing Logistics
Savonia UAS	DP in International Business
Seinäjoki UAS	DP in International Business
TAMK UAS	DP in International Business
Turku UAS	DP in International Business
Vaasa UAS	DP in International Business

The Great Capital Network recruits applicants to Haaga-Helia University UAS, Hämeen UAS, Lahti University of Applied Sciences, Laurea and Metropolia Universities of Applied Sciences. The Network organizes its own entrance examinations separately from other IB-programmes offered by other universities of applied sciences in Finland (Haaga- Helia website, 2010).

3. EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN VIETNAM

3.1 Impacts of education system in Vietnam

3.1.1 Education system

Education has always played a central role in Vietnam culture and community. As Runckel (2009) stated that it is seen as the avenue of advancement and families routinely sacrifice much to ensure their offspring get the required education. The government of Vietnam has for some time set the priority of education in terms of its budget. Currently, education occupies approximately 20% of all state budget expenditures and accounts for 5.5% of GDP (Department of Finance and Planning, MOET Vietnam, 2008).

In Vietnamese culture, education is highly prized and respected. There is a high adult literacy rate of 94 per cent, although the rate is much lower among ethnic minorities (British council, 2009). Parents encourage their children to study and excel in their education and their involvement can be regarded as the key to the child's success in school. Vietnamese parents take their responsibility to teach their children very seriously. As Ton Nu Thi Ninh – a professional diplomat in Vietnam mentioned that Vietnamese placed a higher value on education rather than on material success. In brief, Ninh concluded that "Depending upon the family for financial support, requesting permissions for expenditures, and having parents make decisions for them characterized the traditional Vietnamese child".

Having a look at Vietnamese and Finnish education system in Figure 4 and Figure 5, it is clear to recognise main difference of system.

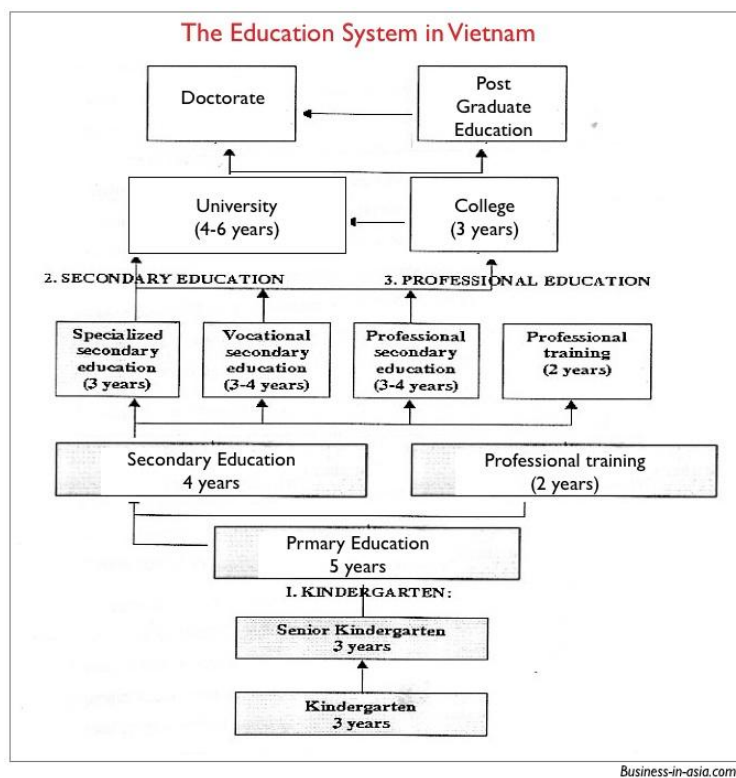


Figure 4: Education system in Vietnam (Runckel, 2009)

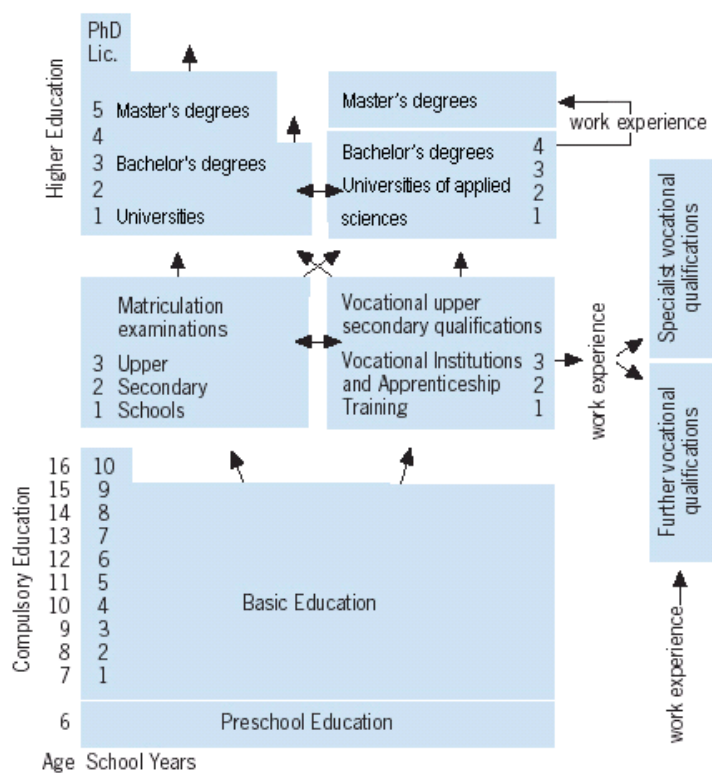


Figure 5: Education system in Finland (Ministry of Education, 2009)

Finland is regarded as one of the countries with the highest quality of education. The key words in Finnish education are quality, efficiency, equity and internationalisation. Education is considered to be one of the fundamental rights of all citizens. Special attention is also paid to quality enhancement and impact in education, training and research and to internationalisation (Finnish board of education, 2009)

However, Vietnam's education is recognised as inefficient, lacking of training and equity and lower education according to Le Quan Tan – the Director of Secondary Education Department in Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam, 2006). The government always implements many reforms every year to improve Vietnamese education system overall qualitative goal, but there is seem not much improvement.

The Vietnamese structure of the formal education system comprises 12 grades. Primary education is from grade one to five, lower-secondary education including grades six to nine and the grades 10 to 12 are upper-secondary education. According to British Council (2009), the academic year is about 42 weeks in 2 semesters and the school week is six days long for secondary pupils and five for primary. Most students go to school for half a day, as the demand for premises obliges most schools to teach in shifts.

The same author also argues that on completion of grade 12, students may apply for university or college or a vocational training school. Competition for the first two of these is fierce and admission is by competitive entrance examination. The programmes offered are mostly associate degree and Bachelor's degree courses at undergraduate level and Master's and PhDs at postgraduate level.

In addition, it is essential to understand how the credit system works in Vietnam and its difference to Finnish education, Runckel (2009) stated that a credit system is now in place at a number of Vietnamese Universities to

replace the older subject based system. In the new credit system, each course is assigned a credit amount. Each credit represents one hour of theoretical lectures plus one hour of preparation per week over a 14-16 week semester. The amount of credit can be regards similarly to Finnish education. For example, a four-year program will normally require a total of 210 credits and a five-year program require 270 credits and six-year programs require 320 credits. However, the flexibility of choosing optional studies is still limited in Vietnamese higher education.

Runckel (2009) interestingly provided a 10-point grading system of Vietnam at all levels of schools. At basic and upper secondary school, students' performance in Finnish education is also evaluated identically to Vietnamese grading system. However, courses are assessed according to the scale 5-point grading in Finnish higher education (Finnish National Board of Education, 2009). In general, the normal passing levels in 10-point system is 5 and in 5-point system is 1 respectively. They are defined as below tables:

Table 2: Vietnamese grading system at all levels (Runckel, 2009)

Vietnam
9-10 – Excellent
8-9 - Very Good
7-8 Good - about 35% of the students are at this level
5-6 - average - about 50% of students at this level
4 or below - Fail

Table 3: Finnish education grading system (Finnish National Board of Education, 2009)

Finnish basic, upper secondary education	Finnish higher education
9 -10 - Excellent	5 – Excellent
8 – 8,99 – Very good	4 – Very good
7 - 7,99 -	3 – Good
6- 6,99 - Satisfactory	1-2 - Satisfactory
5, 99 – 5 Sufficient – the minimum pass	0 – Fail

3.1.2 Figure of Vietnamese students studying abroad

McMillan and Opem (2004) stated that studying abroad gives life-time of benefits. It provides opportunities to launch the student's future career, personal growth and development and a chance to make life-long friends. Therefore, in recent years, studying abroad has grown rapidly year by year because it offers the student likelihood of better future employment.

Overseas study can be either by scholarship or through personal finances and the overseas-study consulting market in Vietnam is highly competitive (Runckel, 2009). Hundreds of education consulting centres and non-profit organizations are operating in the big cities. Moreover, the internet also gives students the ability to find the scholarships and the school and the opportunities to go overseas to study by themselves. In addition, the overseas study exhibitions organized by the educational institutions have provided opportunities to the student and introduced the student to ways to assess to foreign institutes by themselves. Most institutes that participated in exhibitions in Vietnam are from the US, England, Australia and other European countries, but there is seldom involvement of Finland. The main reason for that is that those countries are mostly English-speaking countries and market leaders of studying abroad.

In recent years, Vietnamese students have studied at the university level in more than 30 countries and territories and the Government's policy has encouraged Vietnamese students to study overseas. For many Vietnamese students, their favourite destinations include China, Australia, the US, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore, where they can enjoy a good education. (Vietnam Bridge, 2008) The ministry said China ranked the highest in attracting Vietnamese students, with 10,000, followed by Australia and the US with 8,500 to 9,000 each, respectively.

VietNamNet Bridge (2008) stated that about 60,000 Vietnamese students are studying overseas, according to an official from the Ministry of Education and Training. Also, in survey of British Council in Vietnam (2009). Those students are clearly clustered around a few cities where the wealth is concentrated. A shortage of places and variable quality of local provision at undergraduate level means that there is a great potential for first degrees and access to higher education.

The same author also mentioned it is important to acknowledge that English is the language of choice for Vietnamese seeking to enhance their educational and career opportunities. In addition, main markets of students are in major cities, including Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and, increasingly, Haiphong, Danang and Can Tho. There is a tradition of studying abroad and no longer any cultural or political barriers to prevent it. Investment in children's education is given the highest priority and is seen as an acceptable way to spend new wealth. State-owned institutions, public schools, and English learning centres are seeking help to upgrade both standard and specialized English courses (World Bank, 2009).

Due to the tendency of studying abroad, there are some potential problems and challenges that Vietnamese students can face when studying overseas. One of the main first problems is the cultural shock. When student come to study in a foreign country for the first time, it is understandable that they encounter many problems. Students may be surprised by this, and at some

stages they will probably use the term culture shock to explain their reactions (Eickelmann, 2008).

Culture shock consists of distinct phases, though not everyone passes through these phases and not everyone is in the new culture long enough to pass through all three phases: honey moon phase, negotiation phase and adjustment phase (Pedersen, 1995, 9).

Honeymoon Phase is the period when differences between the home and new culture are seen in positive attitude. People observe new experiences and discoveries. However, this stage eventually ends like many honeymoons and “When an individual sets out to study, live or work in a new country, he or she will invariably experience difficulties with language, housing, friends, school, work...” (Belliini, 2005).

Negotiation Phase is continuous process of honeymoon phase. It often appears after weeks when differences between the old and new culture and may create anxiety and angers. These reactions are typically centred on the formidable language barrier as well as stark differences in: public hygiene; traffic safety; the type and quality of the food, etc (Mavrides, 2009).

Adjustment Phase is the last phase and starts after some time (usually 6 – 12 months), one grows accustomed to the new culture and develops routines. Reaching this stage requires a constructive response to culture shock with effective means of adaptation (Winkelman, 1994).

3.2 Impact of culture

3.2.1 Definition and levels of culture

Culture’s definition is highly misunderstood and misused notion; therefore, it is important to acknowledge its definition. First, it is important to know that the

word culture comes from a Latin word "cultura " which means "cultivating, inhabiting, worshipping, and protecting" (Eagleton, 2000) and it has different meanings.

For instance, Hofstede (1991,5 – 6) states that culture is collective programming of the mind and distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.

It is also argued in "Understanding Intercultural Communication: An Introduction and Overview' of Porter and Samovar (2000, 13). It defines as consistent of the knowledge, experiences, believes, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, timing, roles and spatial relations, concepts of the universe, material objects and possessions. Also, according to Andersen (2000, p 258) stated culture as " an implicit nonverbal phenomenon" due to the majority of features of one's cultures are obtained from imitation and observation and less by a verbal instruction and expression.

However, the word "culture" is most commonly used in three basic senses:

- Bunch of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group
- An integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning
- High culture: Excellent taste in the humanities and fine arts.

When we interact with someone from another culture, we only hear their words and see their behaviour. Therefore, it is like seeing only the tip of the iceberg. There is much more below the surface that we may not even be aware of. What a person says and does can be influenced by his/her own cultural values and attitudes. Those values and attitudes are affected by the history, geography and religion of his/her culture and country. Thus, in order to communicate more effectively with people from other cultures, it is necessary to look below the surfaces of the Iceberg.

According to Amorim (2001), a model of Iceberg is cited from AFS Orientation Handbook (1984) as in Figure 2. The main idea is that culture can be pictured as an iceberg: only a very small portion of the iceberg is visible above the waterline whilst the tip of the iceberg is in fact supported by a much larger, although invisible, part underneath the waterline. This part of the iceberg is its foundation.

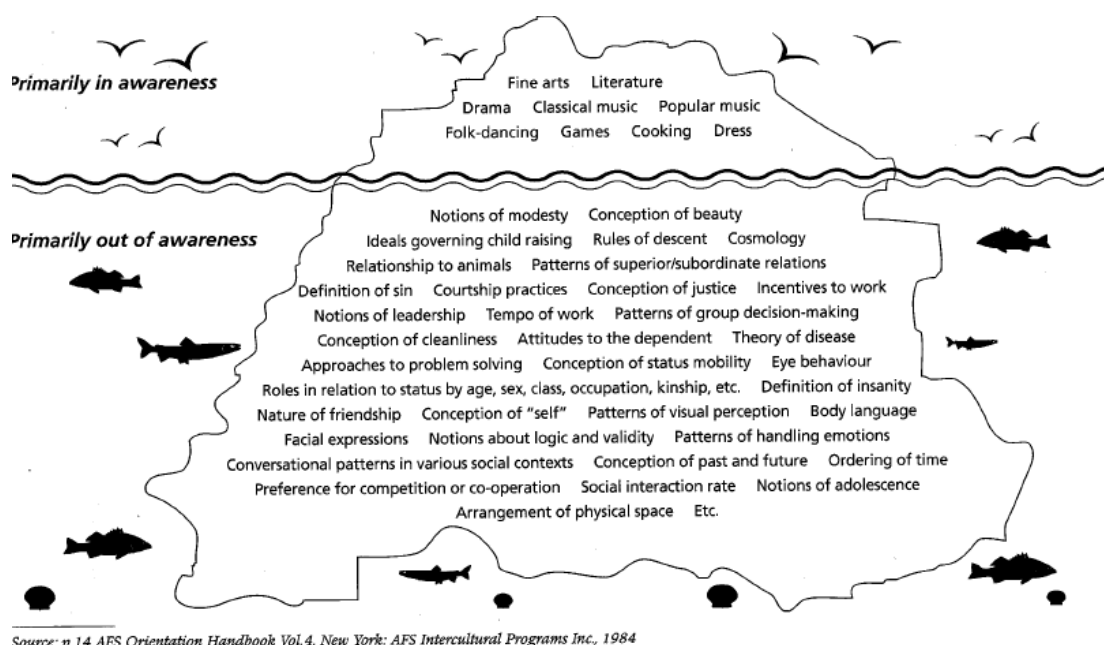


Figure 6: The cultural Iceberg, Amorim (2001) adapted from AFS Handbook (1984)

Furthermore, cultural differences manifest themselves in different ways and differing levels of depth. According to Hofstede (1991, 7) key elements of cultural manifestation are stated in Figure 7 including symbols, values, heroes and rituals.

Symbols are words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning which is only recognized by those who share a particular culture. New symbols easily develop, old ones disappear. Symbols from one particular group are regularly copied by others. This is why symbols represent the outermost layer of a culture.

Heroes are persons, past or present, real or fictitious, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture. They also serve as models for behaviour.

Rituals are collective activities, sometimes superfluous in reaching desired objectives, but are considered as socially essential. They are therefore carried out most of the times for their own sake (for example ways of greetings, paying respect to others, religious and social ceremonies).

The core of a culture is formed by values. They are broad tendencies for preferences of certain state of affairs to others (good-evil, right-wrong, natural-unnatural). Many values remain unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore they often cannot be discussed, nor can they be directly observed by others. Values can only be inferred from the way people act under different circumstances.

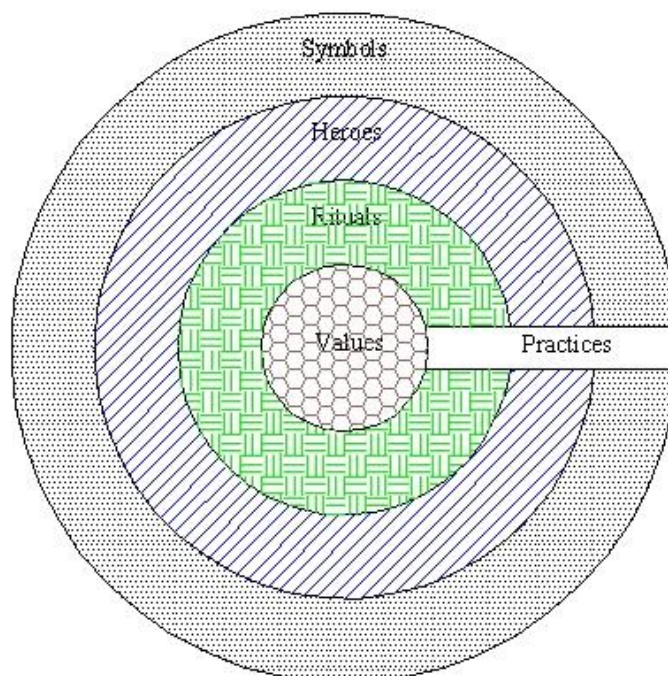


Figure 7: "Onion diagram" of Manifestations of culture (Hofstede 1991, 7)

In this study, main levels of culture will be discussed in order to understand cultural differences between Vietnamese culture and Finnish culture. As a conclusion, the significant awareness of Vietnamese culture will develop strategies to recruit new Vietnamese students and remain them continue to study in Finnish universities. However, it is impossible to discuss all of the levels; therefore, I will mention of communication (including verbal and non-verbal communication, language), national culture and cultural affects to decision making in the next chapters. Also, an illustration of difference between Vietnamese and Finnish manifestations of culture in depth will be provided after that.

3.2.2 Impacts of Vietnamese culture

3.2.2.1 Cultural manifestation

According to study of Nurmi and Üksväre (1995, 38-39) and the brief analysis of the researcher from Hunt (2002), the cultural manifestations of Finland and Vietnam are explored respectively in Figure 8 and 9. They indicate the huge difference between these two countries culture. For example, core values of Finnish culture are honesty, independence in structure and reservedness whilst Vietnamese culture emphasizes in family and community, collectivism, hospitality, etc. Also, some main rituals of Finnish culture are drinking pattern, skiing and wander in the forest, sauna and independence day, however, Vietnamese ritual's values are masculinity, festival and community activities, pray in pagodas and temples, respects to older, good education and drinking pattern. That is why it is essential to acknowledge the main features of Vietnamese culture in order to recruit new Vietnamese students and retain existing students.

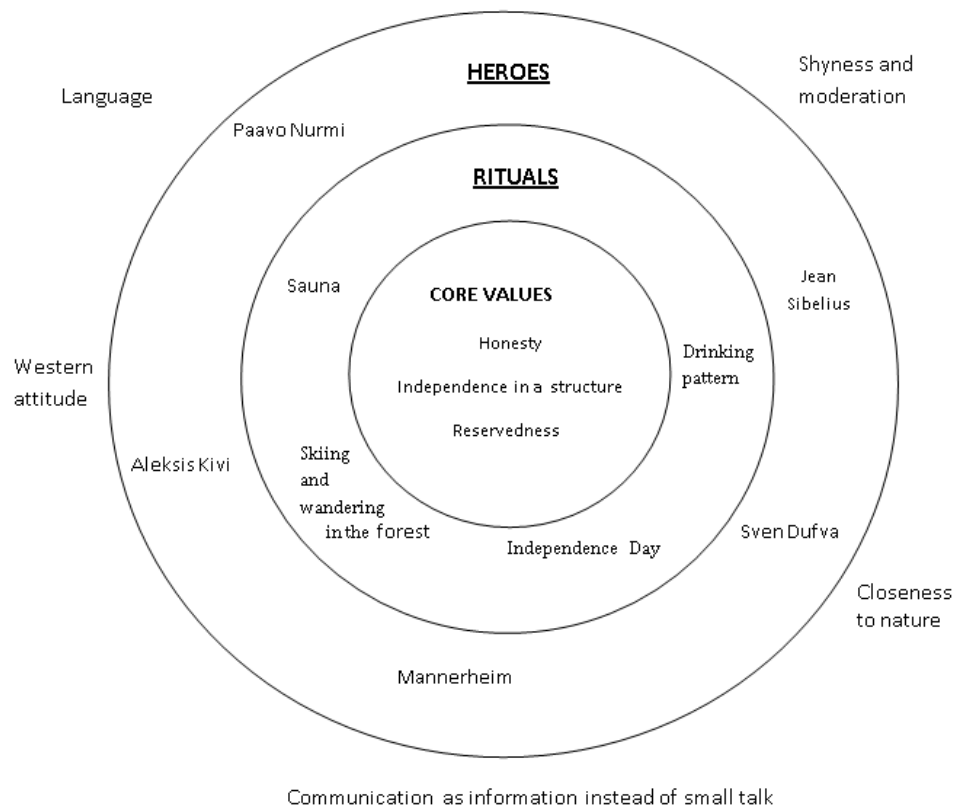


Figure 8: Levels of Finnish culture: Nurmi and Üksvärav (1995, 38- 39)

Different from Finnish culture which communication as information instead of small talk, Vietnamese culture regards communication as small talk. It means that people can easily gather each other in normal daily life. Communication is regarded strongly as the most important way to know each other, make friends and create relationships. Therefore, based on the model of “Onion Diagram” (Hofstede 1991, 7), I have complied main levels of Vietnamese culture in Figure 9.

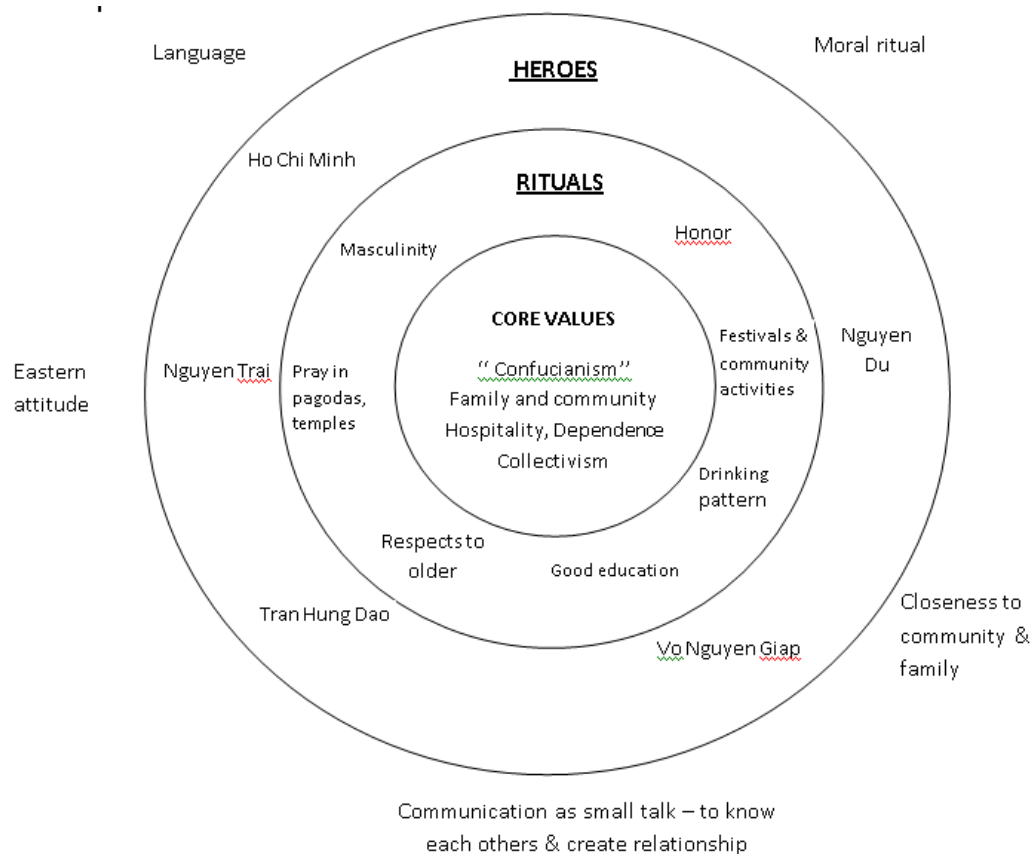


Figure 9: Levels of Vietnamese culture

Vietnam is possibly still mysterious and unknown to most people outside the country or many Westerners still imagine it through the lens of war with Americans. In fact, it is a country with 4000-year-culture and traditions, and an interesting place for finding out the aged-old values, festivals and characteristic Asians. Vietnam has a very rich culture that has been shaped by many different civilizations throughout history. Te (1987, 6) stated that Vietnamese history is divided into the following periods: (1) Prehistoric; (2) Chinese domination; (3) the Era of Independence; and (4) French domination. Therefore, through many long struggles, the Vietnamese have created their unique culture.

In each region of Vietnam, lifestyles vary and differ among others; however, some aspects of life still remain fundamentally the same. Core values of

culture embrace the principles of Confucianism, are harmony, duty, honour, respect, education and allegiance to the family (Hunt, 2002)

Hunt also defined harmony as the concept that is based widely on the teaching of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Harmony can be achieved if one must observe moderation and avoid extremes in communication, daily life activities, consumption of food and drink, and social interaction to ensure physical safety and adhere to the moral imperative of keeping one's dignity unimpaired. Hunt (2002) also stated that duty and honour are among the highest cultural values which are far different from Finnish culture. For instance, individuals have the ultimate duty to carry themselves with the utmost dignity in all circumstances so that they are not to bring shame to oneself and the family. Parents raise their children properly, provide them with food and shelter, and educate and instil them with moral values without any finance aid from government. Therefore, children are born to acknowledge of taking care their parents when they get old.

In same stream of thoughts, Hunt (2002) stated respect as foundation of Confucius' teaching and as guiding principle of interpersonal relationships in Vietnamese society. Respect is earned by leading a virtuous life, fulfilling one's filial and social duties, accomplishing heroic deeds and attaining a high degree of intellectuality. Respect is important in the family and each person has his or her own place with other family members

Family is also one of the most important features in Vietnamese culture. It plays an importance role in people's life. Many homes support large extended families with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins all living under the same roof. Although because of the increase of population time by time, the government encourages and rewards people for small families from one to two children.

Communication as signs of rituals and education in Vietnamese culture has huge different from Finnish culture. Those features will be discussed in next chapter 2.2.1 and chapter 2.3 respectively.

3.2.2.2 Communication

Communication is a notion that roots from a Latin word “Communicare” which means doing together (Aberg, 1996). Hall (1959, 186) argued that “Culture is communication and communication is culture”. People from different countries communicate in ways that often lead to misunderstanding because of various cultures in all over the world. Being aware of these differences usually leads to fewer misunderstandings, more effective communication and to mutual respect, aimed to describe, analyse and interpret communication style and certain cultural features in Vietnam in this chapter.

Therefore, communication styles of Vietnamese people should be considered when recruiting Vietnamese students. Firstly, it is essential to acknowledge main features of language. Later, examples of non verbal communication will be provided as guidance to understand and communicate with Vietnamese people.

3.2.2.3 Language

Language is one of the oldest human institutions and the most sophisticated medium of expression. Language is regarded as a symbol of one culture: language, verbal and nonverbal, is one of the inseparable elements of culture that as Samovar and Porter (2006, 9). Thus, it is essential to acknowledge Vietnamese language in order to understand its culture.

Back to 166 BC, the West's involvement in Vietnam brought the arrival of many merchants from the Roman Empire, and then in 1292 with the visit of Marco Polo, and the early 1500s with the arrival of Portuguese and other European traders and missionaries. Alexandre de Rhodes, a French Jesuit

priest improved on earlier work by Portuguese missionaries and developed the Vietnamese romanized alphabet Quốc Ngữ in *Dictionarium Annamiticum Lusitanam et Latinum* in 1651 (Travel Mekong Delta ,2008)

As a language, Vietnamese is exceptionally flexible and lyrical, and poetry plays a strong role in both literature and the performing arts. According to Hunt (2002), Vietnamese often appear to be reserved, non-responsive, or non-assertive by American standards. Children are encouraged to think deeply before speaking in modest and reserved manner. It is believed that useless and excessive verbal expressions can create discord and animosity. Hasty words and slips of tongue are considered to be as detrimental as hasty actions and bad deeds. Use of proper language conveys respect and helps create harmonious relationships with others. The same author also provided that non-verbal communication is important in conveying respect in Vietnamese communication, linguistic expressions. Additionally, Ministry of Education and Training (2006) mentioned that for certain feelings, Vietnamese favour non-verbal conservation. An instance of that is people prefer to express their feeling of “sorry” or “thank you” by nonverbal through smile or silence. Popular examples of non-verbal communication will be mentioned in the next chapter.

3.2.2.4 Examples of non-verbal communication

To compare with Finnish cultures, children can ask question and disagree to the older or senior higher social status. Some common Vietnamese gestures will be provided in the Table 4.

Table 4: Examples of non-verbal gestures (Hunt, 2002)

Non-verbal gesture	In Vietnamese Culture
Nodding	Greeting, affirmative reply, agreement
Bowing	Greeting, great respect
Avoiding eye contact	Showing respect to people senior in age or status or of opposite sex
Winking	Not decent, especially when directed at people of the opposite sex
Smiling	Agreement, embarrassment, disbelief, mild disagreement, appreciation, apology
Shaking hands	Friendly greeting between men (not the elderly), not customary between women or between a man and a woman; acceptable between a Vietnamese woman and a non-Vietnamese man
Gesture of beckoning with index finger	Offensive to adults; threatening to children
Holding hands with or putting an arm over the shoulder of a person of the same sex	Friendly gesture, no sexual connotation
Crossing arm	Sign of respect
Putting one or both hands in the pockets or on the hips while talking	Arrogance, lack of respect
Patting a person's back, especially those senior in age or status	Disrespectful
Pointing to other people while talking	Disrespectful
Whistling at performers	Displeasure
Putting one's feet on a table or Rude sitting on a desk while talking	Rude

According to Hunt (2002), there are several typical features of Vietnamese non-verbal communication.

Firstly, an example of that is concerning of making direct eye contact. As children, Vietnamese children are taught that a direct eye contact with parents, teachers or authority figures means challenge and should be avoided. However, it is different from Finnish culture that children are encouraged to make eye contact as a sign of respect.

Also, direct eye contact with someone of the opposite sex can be interpreted as deep passion and should be discouraged, especially in public settings. Children are taught to remain silent and listen attentively when speaking to someone older or to an authority figure and not to talk back or ask questions. Asking questions or disagreeing with an authoritative speaker is like challenging the senior person's social status.

4. SUGGESTIONS TO RECRUIT VIETNAMESE STUDENTS IN KYMENLAAKSO UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

4.1 Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences (UAS)

Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences (UAS) is a multidisciplinary school which focuses on Logistics, Health Promotion and International Business. The campuses are located in Kotka, Kouvola and Kuusankoski, only about 130 km from Helsinki. The university offers two Bachelor degree programmes instructed in English including Design and International Business and a Master Degree in Business Administration (MBA). However, the International Business degree has attracted more international students. It offers Bachelor of Business Administration specialised in International Marketing and International Trade. The scope of the degree programme is 210 credits and the duration of studies is three years and a half. The language of teaching is English (Kymenlaakso UAS website, 2010)

Since Kymenlaakso UAS started to have Vietnamese students in January 2005, Vietnamese students apply for studying only International Business Degree. In total, twenty four Vietnamese students have been studying in Kymenlaakso UAS as degree students according to statistics of Student affair office in Kouvola campus. However, most students have resigned to transfer to other universities. The figures of Vietnamese that attends Kymenlaakso UAS are stated as below:

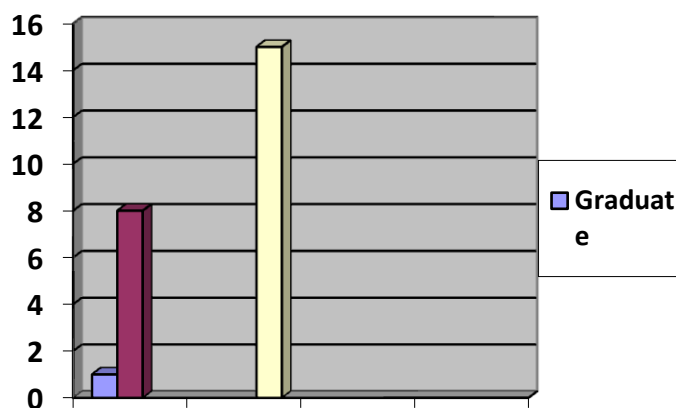


Figure 10: Graduate, remained and resigned Vietnamese student

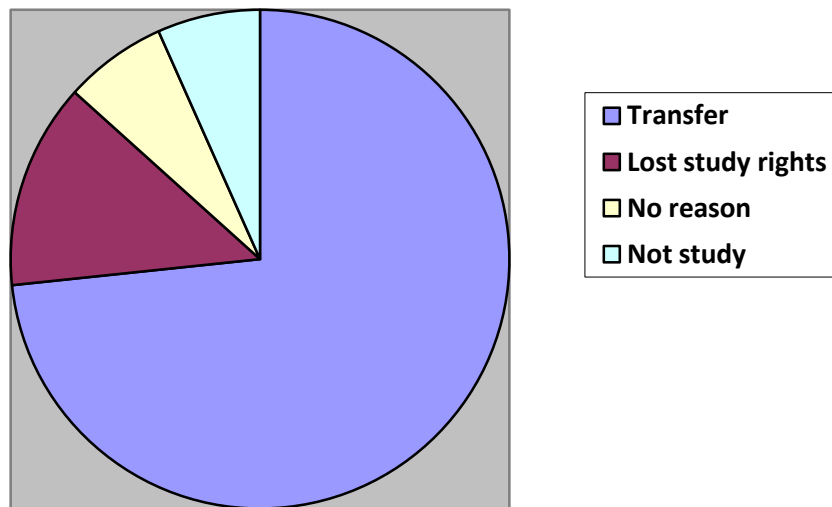


Figure 11: Different reasons of resigned students

From the table in Figure 10, it can be clearly seen that there is only one student has graduated and sixteen students have resigned among the total of 24 students. The only student that has been graduated is from BT5 group in the Kouvola campus, therefore, there have not been any students that have graduated from the Kotka campus. In fact, there are two students that study International Marketing in Kotka. Furthermore, If the sixteen students did not resign, many of them would graduate in June 2010. Because in Spring term 2007, there was a big group of Vietnamese students in group IB07 (International Business Degree). The group had 10 Vietnamese students, but only 2 students remain studying in Kymenlaakso UAS. The statistics has showed that Kymenlaakso UAS has lost many Vietnamese students. Also, in the Figure 11, it is illustrated that main type of resign of many students is to transfer to another universities in Finland. In figure 11, eleven students have transferred after a half year of studies to another University of Applied Sciences and one student after a year of studies).

There is a slight number of students that have resigned because of other reasons. Among them, two of them have lost their study right because they did not perform the registration (absent / present) after half a year or studies,

one has not informed about the reason for resignation after 1 and a half year of studies) and one has never started the studies. Thus, it is relevant to understand the Vietnamese culture and education systems in order to attract effectively more potential Vietnamese students.

4.2 Introduction of empirical part

The empirical part of the thesis is firstly based in two in-depth interviews, focus group and content analysis. The interviews and focus group were carried out in Vietnamese.

The first in-depth interview was taken from a PhD of education psychology (Nguyen Thi Thanh), 48 years old. The interview was done on the 23 February 2009. She is working as an education professor and head-masters of a private high school in Vietnam. The school is located in Hanoi, which is the capital of Vietnam where there are many potential students for studying abroad. She has worked in education fields for over 20 years and some of her previous students have studied abroad.

The other in-depth interview was carried out on 28th February 2009 in Vietnam. The interviewee is Phi Minh Tram, 30 years old. She has been working as an education consultant for studying abroad for 7 years. Therefore, she has various experience of dealing with Vietnamese students who want or already study abroad in many different countries such as Finland, England, Australia and other countries.

The focus group were done by a meeting gathered with 10 respondents who have been studied or graduated from Finnish universities such as Haaga-Helia, Laurea, Turku, Arcada, Lahti, and Kymenlaakso University.

The interviewees and focus group were chosen because they were experienced of studying abroad of Vietnamese students. They have experienced difficulties, elements that affect decision - making of studying

overseas of Vietnamese students. Also, they are very open to share experiences and suggestions concerning recruiting students.

4.3 Suggestions to recruit students

4.3.1 Background information of culture and education system difference, challenges, student's expectations, studying abroad tendency in Vietnam, factors influence decision-making, feedback and suggestions to improve of Finnish universities

In order to recruit more numbers of Vietnamese students, it is important to research background information of Vietnamese and Finnish culture differences, feedback and expectations of existing students of Finnish universities. Also, it is relevant to get their opinions of challenges and difficulties that they have overcome when studying overseas. In addition, their suggestions of what to improve studying environment in Finnish universities are worth to attain.

4.3.1.1 Culture and education system difference

From the interviews of the education professor (Nguyen) and education consultants in Vietnam, there are few main clear gaps or difference between Vietnamese and Finnish culture. Both the interviewees agreed that Vietnamese culture is family-oriented, rituals is more important than excellence at studying. According to Nguyen, an old saying stated that "First learn rituals, later learn knowledge". However, Finnish culture is more oriented to individualisms and independence; a relationship between people is not a tie to such an extent.

Furthermore, as the education consultant's opinion (Phi), biggest differences between culture in Vietnam and Finland are the distance between Western and Eastern culture. Some examples of different cultures have been described in her answers. For example, a Vietnamese family - Eastern culture

can include even a few different generations and children are automatically known their responsibilities to take care parents when they getting older. While in Finland - Western culture, independence, closeness to nature, reservedness are key features of culture. People do not stay so close to each other and they often respect each other's own privacy. Also, they do not duty to take care parents when they get older.

A professor in education, Nguyen acknowledges much information of both Finnish and Vietnamese universities. She has mentioned that Finnish schools train students to be independent and work creatively and offer high technologies and facilities of learning and studies. She also recognises Finnish education system's advantages including free tuition fees, law treats everyone equally, Finnish student are well-educated in similar levels to many exchange programs with other international schools. To compare with Vietnamese education, there are huge gaps. Students are often treated very unfairly and unequally in Vietnamese schools (different treatments to rich and poor students).Also, not all of people have opportunities to study to get a good education and the school facilities and equipments are still old fashioned or insufficient for a large amount of students.

4.3.1.2 Studying abroad tendency and factors influence decision-making

In Vietnam, the tendency of studying overseas has been more and more popular and has increased in recent years.

As Nguyen stated:

" In the past, studying abroad seems to be like a dream to many Vietnamese students. Many of them who want to study abroad have to apply for scholarships from government. There are tough competition of the limited number of scholarships. Nowadays with the globalisation and the development of Vietnamese economy, there is an increasing number of people who have a chance to study overseas. This tendency seems increasing dramatically without stops in recent years. So, with population of

over 85 million people, Vietnamese students can be regarded as potential target of international students for foreign higher education institutions in the world”

According to Nguyen, three main factors that influence students and parent's decision in choosing certain countries school for studying abroad are defined as follow.

- Emotion/ psychology factor: In Vietnam, because of public psychology and traditional culture, Vietnamese people often tend to go abroad in well-known countries where there are more Vietnamese or more suggestions from other people; for example America, Australia, England. Therefore, although Finland is a country that has been several years in a row at the top of world's competitiveness lists of education, amount numbers of Vietnamese who live and study in Finland is still limited.
- Economic factor: Numbers of Vietnamese people live in rural areas are still mostly huge of population, thus, their income and economical abilities to study abroad is low. If they choose a country to study abroad, they would want to study and work part time to support their life costs. However, in Finland, many foreign students still have many difficulties to find good part time jobs because of language and other barriers.
- Society factor

Phi, the education consultant also mentions a few main factors to consider when Vietnamese students decide to study overseas as below:

- Work opportunity, immigration after graduating
- Studying environment: English or another foreign language
- Life style, culture and climate
- Existence of relatives in the country

Among those four factors, the first and the four are often important. In Finland, foreign students still do not have much work opportunity and immigration as some other international countries. Also, Finland is still a new studying abroad

destination for Vietnamese students; therefore, Vietnamese people community in Finland is still minor.

Nguyen stated that the main market leaders or first choice in Vietnam are the US, Australia, the UK, Singapore, other countries that provide many opportunities to work and recently China as the new destination for Vietnamese students. Because it is the neighbour country, have culture closed to our culture and additional living costs and tuition fees are reasonable to Vietnamese student's budget.

4.3.1.3 Challenges and difficulties

According to Nguyen, when a Vietnamese student first comes to Finland for studying, they may meet some potential difficulties in settling and adapting to the Finnish culture. In addition, they may feel lonely and hard to make friends at the beginning since they are not so close to Finnish culture. Similarly, Phi stated that "Get acquainted with new atmosphere by living in new life styles, new cultures. Some of them send us email talking about their difficulties, for example; .some feel excited and joy when first studying over. However, many others take hold of homesickness and sadness". For instance, student C in focus had mentioned her difficulties of adapting new culture and lifestyle. Another example is that most of students in focus group have experienced culture shock. They often have some pretty disheartening moment when they first moved Student I, H) or feeling lonely and homesick for at least few weeks (Student E, G)

Also, cold weather can cause difficulties for them since Vietnamese people get used to live in a tropical country, for example some Students D and J in focus group.

Another difficulty is the Finnish language. It is one the biggest challenges that many Vietnamese students have face, including many students in the focus group.

Furthermore, studying methods and styles also cause challenges for some Vietnamese student at the universities, for instance in case of Student F and Student I which are participants of the focus group. Student I mentioned: “I have some problem to adapt with different styles of studying here. It takes time to get used to it because in my country, students are not familiar with speaking their opinions much or argue with teachers in class. Also studying in Finland requires more self-studying than in my country”. There is a small amount of students that may have problems in finding practical training in Finland (Student B).

4.3.1.4 Feedback of Finnish universities and expectations when studying overseas

According to Phi - the education consultant and most of students in focus group, some positive feedback that most Vietnamese student who have studied in Finland are good facilities and equipment of education. However, some negative feedback is often related to the cold weather and the food and lack of social activities. She also compared to different feedback of students who study in the UK or Australia as “or the schools services were great and there are many activities, sport clubs, etc that they can attend. In addition, there is a job seeking office that is often located in the campus to help them find job easily and for free. That is one of factor that Finnish universities may lack of attention”. Therefore, the interesting feedback should be considered in such a manner that Finnish universities would have more possibility to attract more Vietnamese students.

Nowadays many Vietnamese students have applied to study abroad. Thus, it is essential to know what they expect to gain from studying overseas. From Nguyen’s point of view and focus group discussions, Vietnamese student expectation are “to study in international environment” (Student J, D, C, I, G and E) “ to improve foreign language skills”(Student J,H) and “to have many opportunities to successful careers in future” (Student B, C, G, F) . Furthermore, some additional expectations that have been discussed in focus group are to attain professional knowledge and living experiences (Student A)

to improve self-confidence (Student A and B) and to have many opportunities to work part-time job to fulfil my living expenses (Students E).

4.3.1.5 Suggestions to improve Finnish universities

Phi suggests few methods that Finnish universities can do to help students overcome culture shock in shorter time as below:

They should have some booklet of information of Finnish life style and culture, for example for coming students, for example a book like " Culture shock in Finland" can be useful. Similarly, Student F has similar opinion:

"There should be more information of the universities and living environment in Finland because Vietnamese people do not know much about Finland".

There should be more tutors, especially local ones who can support new students, take them around new places and attend social activities. Also, a more friendly study counsellor should be available to help students. International office should be more involved in helping international students, especially those from totally different cultures.

Moreover, Student A has recommended that Finnish universities should help students to find part-time jobs, especially jobs related to the study. Some universities have been conducting some jobs in office for foreign students or universities can make relationship with Finnish companies in order to provide internships for students.

Another interesting suggestion that should be considered is to market Finnish universities through improving their own school websites. Student G suggested some examples that can be done in reality such as provide some pages in more different language and some short video of the campuses so that applicants can see more information of the university that they apply for. Many website of English or Australian universities have provided this information.

Furthermore, student B urged that there should be more hobbies clubs where people with similar interests can gather to exchange opinions and make friends. Thus, international students would not feel lonely and homesick and have more social life.

Student D who is studying at Kymenlaakso UAS commented some courses that students in Business and Media study fields can study together, for example Marketing communications, advertising and Photoshop courses because those two study fields are located in the same campus and the combination may bring more creative studying environment and more opportunity for students at different fields gather and exchange studying experience.

Later, Student C and I mentioned of Finnish Universities should provide more information and help for students while they search for practical training and thesis's project. Most of students overcome many difficulties about those matters, especially international students.

4.3.2 Partners and cooperation

A partner can play an important role in the recruiting process. The education professor – Nguyen has suggested Finnish universities, especially in the case of Kymenlaakso UAS in particular to build capacity for Vietnamese universities and colleges in delivering joint courses at degree and master levels in those subjects, including media management, business and other fields. As a partner, Finnish universities can introduce modern Finnish teaching and practical learning methodology to Vietnamese partners and also help to improve English language learning for university, college staffs and students. From the sides of Vietnamese Universities, the entrance exams of recruited Vietnamese students to Finnish universities can be hold by Vietnamese universities. Direct recruiting from foreign partners can help to recruit good students and save time and reduce recruiting fees for their English degree program.

A list of some recommended Universities and Colleges in Vietnam can be provided as following table:

Table 5: Lists of recommended Universities and Colleges partners in Vietnam

Name and basic information of University	Study fields suggest to cooperate	Websites, Address
Vietnam University of Commerce, Hanoi They have trained about 2000 students a year. The university already has partners with some universities in France and China)	Bachelor Degree and Master Degree: Many programs in Accounting - Finance, Business Management, Trade, International Marketing, Tourism	Website: http://vcu.edu.vn/ Address: Mai Dich – Cau Giay – Hanoi Tel: (+84) 437643219 – 8370766 E-mail: dhtm@vcu.edu.vn
Foreign trade University in Hanoi and Hochiminh (one of the leading university in business studies in Vietnam, high quality of students) Has global network in Asia and Europe and other continent (for example, the USA and Canadian). Especailly, they o have cooperated program with Norway University and in Denmark (not Finland)	Bachelor Degree: Business English in English Many programs like Financial Management, Business Studies, International Business, Finance and Banking, Economic, Electronic commerce	Website: http://en.ftu.edu.vn/ Address: 91 Street Duong Lang, Dong Da District, Hanoi No15, Street D5, Phuong 25, Binh Thanh District – Hochiminh Tel: (+84) 43775 6004 (Hanoi) (+84) 835127254 (Hochiminh) Email: cs1@ftu.edu.vn cs2@ftu.edu.vn
Hanoi University	Business Administration and Management, Tourism Management, English Studies	Websites: www.hanu.edu.vn ; www.hanu.vn Address: Km 9 , Nguyen Trai – Thanh Xuan – Hanoi Tel: (+84) 438544338 E-mail: hanu@hanu.vn ; daihochanoi@hanu.vn

University of Economics, Hochiminh One of the 10 th leading university in Vietnam (Partners and cooperation with Netherlands and New Zealands, Australlia)	Many programs: Trade, Economic, International Business, Commerce MIB programs with Curtin University, Perth, Australia Cooperate program with CFVG(European Excellence in Management Education) in Master program	Websites: http://www.ueh.edu.vn/ Address: 59 C Nguyen Dinh Chieu, District 3, Hochiminh Tel: (+84)838295299 Email: tchc@ueh.edu.vn
National Economic University, Hanoi One of the 10 th leading university in Vietnam(similar system as University Of Economic Hochiminh (As above)	Economics program, International Business, Finance	Websites: http://www.neu.edu.vn/?lang=english Address: 207, Giai Phong Street - Hai Ba Trung District - Hanoi Tel: (+84) 43869 3761
National University, Hanoi (has global partners with many countries)	Some related course to business: Business Management, International Business,	Websites: http://www.vnu.edu.vn/ Address: 144, Xuan Thuy, Cau Giay District, Hanoi Tel: (+84)) 43754 7461

Phi also urged that Finnish universities can learn examples and methods that the UK has done to gain a lot of Vietnamese students. In Vietnam, the British Council's support to UK institutions in enhancing sustainable partnerships include as below:

Relationships are brokered between UK and Vietnamese universities and colleges by many visits of senior members of staffs to 26 selected universities and colleges in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Danang and Can Tho to understand areas of possible collaboration with UK partners and to communicate PMI2 objectives

Additionally, they organise two PMI2 'speed dating' meetings in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City during the Education UK Exhibitions in 2007, with the participation of 33 Vietnamese universities and colleges in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. PMI2 is part of the UK Government's strategy to confirm the UK's position as a leader in international education and sustain the growth of UK international education delivered both in the UK and overseas, as well as the development of mutually beneficial educational partnerships. Also, they organise a five-day scoping visit for FE colleges in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in January 2008.

The British Council leads on a PR campaign to communicate the strategic alliances and partnership strand and celebrate UK HE and FE institutions' success in winning PMI2 seed funding for collaboration partnership projects with Vietnam in 2007 / 2008 and 2008 / 2009 on the occasion of the Education UK Exhibition in 2008 in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Source: British Council (2009)

More importantly, Finnish universities should market to more students in urban areas than students in big cities because they are potential students who wish to study for free tuition and want to work part-time while studying. Indeed, students in big cities are capable of affording to study abroad in any expensive country and they may not find free tuition and peaceful countries attractive. Also, universities should have more partners and more active to help students find part-time job as well as job after graduating. From many statistics that I have studied showed that for example in England, Australia and America. Universities in those countries often have a group of staff helping students to find jobs. (Nguyen). Furthermore, C's opinion is that University should organize exams by themselves or through local partners, but not the educational consultant centres because it is expensive for local students to apply through those centres.

4.3.3 Cooperation

More effectively, Finnish schools may broaden and cooperate some programs with high schools, colleges and universities in Vietnam (Nguyen and some students in focus group has mention). Because Nguyen mentioned that cooperation with Vietnamese schools can help students plan more easily and there are more professionals to recruit good students for Finnish schools. Students and parents often trust Vietnamese schools and teacher advice (because of strong tradition of respecting teachers) more than educational consultant centres. Because those centres are more like individual, less-trusted and could be expensive.

It is important to introduce Finnish culture and education quality in Vietnam.

For example, the universities can attend some events or activities to exchange relations between Finnish and Vietnamese culture and education to attract student's interest (Student J recommended). Similarly, Student F thinks Finnish university should attend more cooperation exhibitions where many Vietnamese students often interest to look for place to study abroad. Because there is lack of information of studying in Finland when I was in Vietnam and Student B totally agreed with F that exhibitions may be one of the most effective methods that can broaden student's awareness of Finnish education and universities.

In addition, Student E thinks Finnish universities can cooperate as partners not only with universities in Vietnam, but also good high schools in Vietnam where there are potential students for studying higher education. Most of potential high schools should be located in main cities such as Hanoi, Hochiminh and also the closed urban areas around those two big cities.

Some popular websites to search for education exhibitions information in Vietnam to take part in and as well as advertise Finnish universities to Vietnamese students can be listed as the following table:

Table 6: List of popular useful websites for recruiting Vietnamese students

Webiste	Description
http://www.mangduhoc.com.vn/	All information of exhibitions and advertisements of studying in different countries
http://dantri.com.vn/c25s146/duhoc/trang-1.htm	Similar like above website and have huge amount of daily users
http://vnexpress.net/GL/Xa-hoi/Co-hoi-Du-hoc/	Similar as above and also have huge amount of daily users
http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=255930583251&ref=mf	Facebook page of VSAF (Vietnamese Student Association in Finland)- recommended website because they have done exhibitions for advertising studying in Finland. Therefore, it is useful to contact or build partner with this association

More effectively, Finnish schools may widen and create more exchanges programs and activities with high schools, colleges and universities in Vietnam since there are many programs in Vietnamese University can be closed to English study programs in Finland(Student G in focus group said).

4.3.4 Head-hunters and other possibilities

According to Nguyen, recruiting students through Vietnamese students who is studying in Finnish school to be representatives or tutors of Finnish schools can be cost-effective.

Student A's opinion is that Finnish universities can use the head-hunters and word of mouth advertising because she has seen many universities from other countries have been successful in using those methods. Student in focus group suggest that Finnish universities can use the old or existing student to advertise for the university because Vietnamese people tend to live in community and communicate as small talk to each other. They tend to listen to opinions and suggestions from experienced people.

Student D recommends that the universities can improve marketing in their own websites and in some popular websites in Vietnam so that Vietnamese potential students have more opportunities to know about Finnish education and universities.

Students A suggested that Finnish universities should make SWOT analysis of Vietnamese students markets. Universities can define the main location to focus, for example in big cities such as Hanoi and Hochiminh City what methods to be used, and for smaller cities and urban areas. To conclude, in order to use these methods successfully, it is relevant to draw map of Vietnam and mark important location that should be concentrated.

In the North of Vietnam, small important city to recruit students is Hai Phong. The city can be easily seen in the top right hand-side of the map of Vietnam in Figure 12. In the middle of Vietnam, other important cities are Can Tho, Da Nang and Vinh and these cities can be clearly seen in the middle of the map of Vietnam. Also, urban areas which was separated provinces around Hanoi and has been merge to become urban districts of Hanoi City in 2008 such as the old Ha Tay province, Vinh Phuc, Bac Ninh, Hung Yen, Hai Duong and Ha

Nam. These provinces and Hanoi City have been marked from number 1 to number 7 in the Figure 12. At the bottom of the map, Hochiminh City can be seen easily.

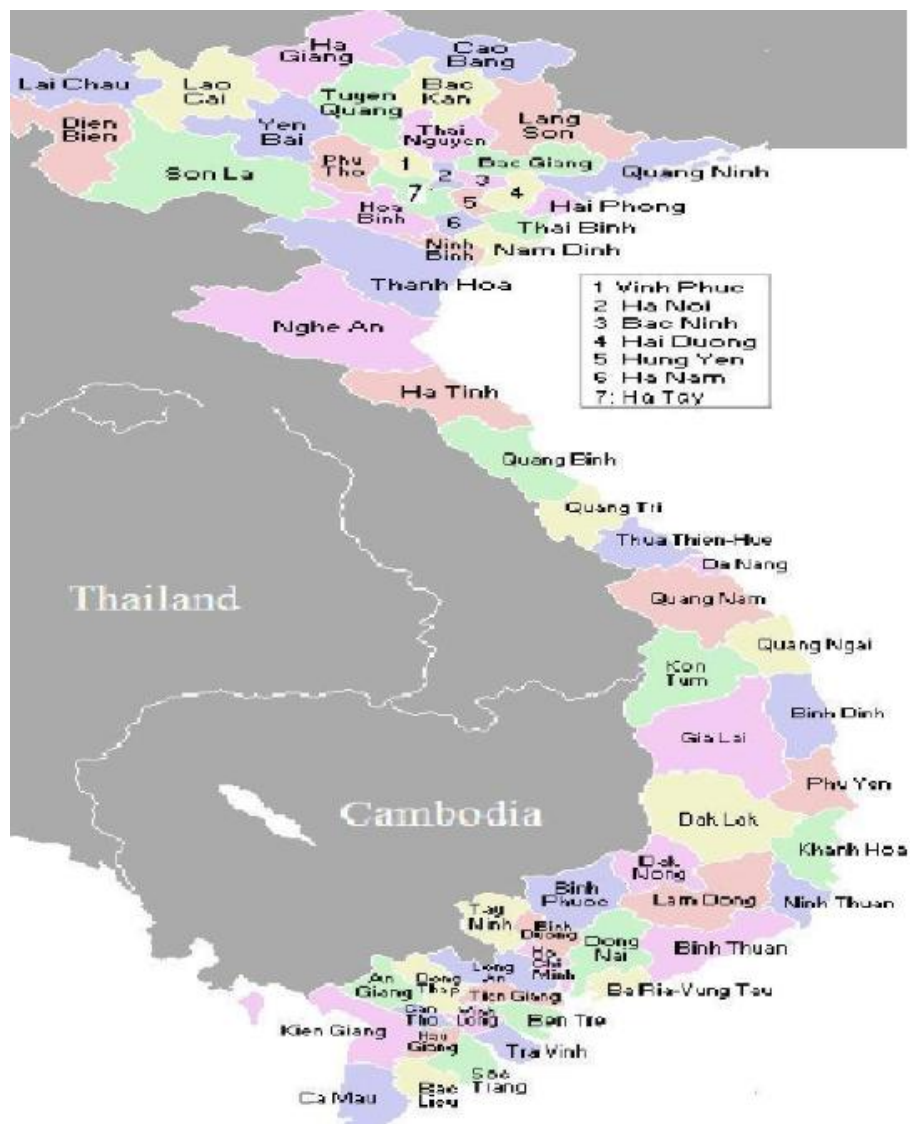


Figure 12: Map of concentrated locations to recruit students in Vietnam

5. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this research was to discuss following areas: Vietnamese culture and education system and approach them as effects to choose place of studying abroad. The expected results were the higher quality and quantity of Vietnamese students to Kymenlaakso University of Applied Science and Finnish universities. Therefore, the research question was: “ What decisions have to be taken into actions in order to recruit higher quantity of Vietnamese students to Finnish university in general and in case of Kymenlaakso University of Applied Science in detail/ particular?

The path to answer this question includes the following: What are main characteristic of Vietnamese culture and education system? What advice that professors, consultant in education and existing students suggest to recruit more students? What cultural aspects have to be considered when marketing to Vietnamese students?

In many respects Finns and Vietnamese culture are very different such as decision –making, education system and life styles. These differences should be taken into consideration when recruiting and attracting Vietnamese students to study in Finnish universities. Culture and education system effect decision-making of students when choosing place for studying abroad.

Vietnamese culture is based on a traditional country with 4000 year culture is an interesting place for finding out the aged-old values, festivals and characterized Asians. Vietnam has a very rich culture that has been shaped by many different civilizations throughout history. Vietnamese culture emphasizes in family and community, collectivism, hospitality, etc. Vietnamese ritual's values are masculinity, festival and community activities,

pray in pagodas and temples, respects to older, good education and drinking pattern. Some main social rituals of Finnish culture are drinking habits, skiing and wandering in the forest, sauna and Independence Day. Different from Finnish culture is information exchange communication instead of small talk, Vietnamese culture regards communication as small talk as the main important way to know each other, making friends and create relationships.

Education in Vietnam has a lot of differences in comparison with the Finnish education system. In Vietnam education, most students have to pay high tuition fees to any kind of schools and it varies differently according to different levels and schools. Therefore, many students cannot afford to study higher education while they are very studious. Also, it can be seen clear that Vietnamese students and their parents make the decisions about studying abroad, whereas the entire family and relatives may participate in the studying and living expenses of the students. However, advantages of Vietnamese education are more outdoor, public activities between different classes.

When recruiting from Vietnam, the main cultural issues such as safety issues, professionalism, high profile should also be considered as key-words. Therefore, it is suggested to marketing/ benchmark the advantages of studying in Finland, for example “clean” life style, free and high quality of education, high technology.

To implement recruiting methods and to reach the objectives, the most key methods are partners, cooperation and other possibilities for example head – hunters, word of mouth, etc.

Partners can be in one of the key roles in the recruiting process. Finnish universities can build capacity for Vietnamese universities and colleges in

delivering joint courses at degree and master levels in those subjects, including media management, business and other fields. More effectively, Finnish schools may broaden and cooperate exchange programs and other possible programs with high schools, colleges and universities in Vietnam.

Cooperation may include by taking part in many recruiting fairs of Vietnamese students in Vietnam. The universities can attend some events or activities to exchange relations between Finnish and Vietnamese culture and education. These activities can attract student's interest because many Vietnamese students often interest to look for place to study abroad.

Universities can improve marketing in their own websites and in some popular websites in Vietnam so that Vietnamese potential students have more opportunities to know about Finnish education and universities

Head-hunters and other methods, for example word of mouth can be regarded as the most effective and challenging methods. For instance, Finnish universities can use the alumni students to advertise the university because Vietnamese people tend to live in a community and communicate to each other. They tend to listen to opinions and suggestions from experienced people.

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Appendix A: Primary Research Schedule

Writing the theoretical part	
Date and time	
March – May 2009	Writing the theories and improving the methodology

Focus groups schedule	
Date and time	
September 2009	Focus group

Interviews schedule		
Date and time	Interviewee	Method
February 2009	Education professor	Face to face interview
February 2009	Education Consultant	Face to face interview

Writing results, analysis, conclusion, and recommendations results	
Date	
May 2009 – April 2010	Writing the results, analysis, conclusion, and recommendations Reviewing the thesis

Appendix B: Interview questions

Interviewee: Education professor (PhD in psychology education)

Date: February 2009

Time: 12.30 – 12.50 (20 minutes)

1. What are the main and potential gaps between Vietnamese and Finnish culture?
2. What are difficulties that Vietnamese students can face when studying abroad in general and in Finland in detail?
3. In Vietnam, the tendency of studying overseas is popular or not? Does it increase or decrease in recent years?
4. What countries are often the market leaders or first choices to Vietnamese students?
5. How do you define/ know the quality of Finnish universities and education system?
6. What factors that influence students and parent's decision in choosing certain countries school for studying abroad?
7. What is student's expectation from studying abroad?
8. As you mentioned above, although Finnish education is listed as one of the best qualities in the world, but numbers of Vietnamese students are still limited. In your opinion, what are the main reasons?
9. Do you think Finnish language can be one of huge barriers in attracting Vietnamese students to Finnish higher education?
10. In your opinion, what Finnish universities should do to recruit more Vietnamese students?
11. I have heard in Vietnam, many students who want to study abroad often do through education consultant service, so why do you suggest about cooperating with schools in Vietnam?

Appendix C: Interview questions

Interviewee: Education consultant

Date: February 2009

Time: 12.30 – 12.50 (20 minutes)

1. Do you think what are biggest difference of culture between Vietnam and Finland?
2. What are difficulties that Vietnamese students can face when studying abroad in general and in Finland in detail?
3. As you mentioned of culture shock, do you think what Finnish universities should do to help students overcome cultures shock in shorter time?
4. What methods does your educational centre consult student studying abroad in Finland?
5. How do you get information and contacts to Finnish schools?
6. How do you cooperate and recruit students with Finnish schools?
7. How many Vietnamese students choose to study in Finland in your centre every year?
8. Why many Vietnamese students still do not interest in studying abroad in Finland, although Finnish education system is free tuition fees and have high quality of education and training.?
9. What do you suggest Finnish universities do to attract more Vietnamese students?

Appendix D: Focus Group

Interviewees: Vietnamese students

Date: September 2009

Time: 12.00 – 13.00 (1 hour)

1. Why do you choose Finland to study? From where do you find about information of studying in Finland?
2. Did you apply for studying there by yourselves or relatives or by Education consulting centre?
3. What university you attend or graduated in Finland? How do you feel about studying there?
4. What challenges and difficulties you have when living and studying in Finland?
5. Have you encountered culture shock? If have, what culture shock experience that you have?
6. What do you expect to gain when studying abroad?
7. What do you think that Finnish universities should improve to satisfy international students?
8. Can you recommend some recruitment methods that can be effective to attract Vietnamese student?